

## Countries and Their Cultures

Search

Powered by JRank

[Countries and Their Cultures](#) » [Africa / Middle East](#) » [Akan](#)

## Akan - Kinship, Family, and Marriage

### Ads by Google

**State Farm® Life** Life Insurance Just Got Easier. Find A State Farm® Agent For Info! [www.statefarm.com/LifeInsurance](http://www.statefarm.com/LifeInsurance)

**How to Fix Your Marriage.** 7 Secrets to Fixing Your Marriage. Alternative to Marriage Counseling. [www.MarriageMax.com/7-Secrets-Free](http://www.MarriageMax.com/7-Secrets-Free)

**Custom Announcements** Choose From 3K Designs Online. Save 50%. Buy 10 for \$3.99 Today! [www.vistaprint.com/announcements](http://www.vistaprint.com/announcements)

**\$99 Divorce Package** Covers Custody Support Assets & Debts. Call Now! 1-877-202-8482 [www.LegalHelpNow.org](http://www.LegalHelpNow.org)

### Ads by Google

**Child Sponsorship Programs**  
You Can Help Change Everything For A Child In Need. Sponsor Today!  
[WorldVision.org/Child\\_Sponsorship](http://WorldVision.org/Child_Sponsorship)

**School Grants For Women**  
Improve Your Life, You May Qualify For Grants To Start School Online!  
[online-school.classesandcareers.com](http://online-school.classesandcareers.com)

**Social Workers with a BSW**  
Earn an MSW in as little as a year  
One-year program online through USC

All Akan groups recognize matrilineal descent. The basic group is the clan, of which there are eight; they are dispersed among the many kingdoms. Members of a subclan tend to occupy a single town or village. The clan is an exogamous group. It is comprised of constituent groups that may be referred to as lineages, but these do not form any kind of segmentary lineage system, lineages being attached to others by propinquity and the power and wealth of the host lineage. Although there has been much confusion in accounts of the Akan peoples between matriliney and matriarchy, authority within clans and

[msw.USC.edu/Virtual-Academic-Center](http://msw.USC.edu/Virtual-Academic-Center)

### Medicare/Medicaid Plans

Have One of Our Knowledgeable

Specialists Give You a Call.

[HFNYCMedicare.org/SpecialNeedsPlans](http://HFNYCMedicare.org/SpecialNeedsPlans)

lineages is held firmly by men, succession being from a man to his brother or to his closest sister's son.

Marriage is expected to be exogamous, and is extremely simple. There is no bride-wealth, the union being effected by the transfer of rum or other drink and

some money from the groom to the bride's immediate family. Divorce is extremely easy and may be initiated by either men or women. The most usual causes are adultery and the barrenness of wives.

Legitimacy is important both for inheritance and to define a person as having, or not having, slave ancestry. It demands not only a proper marriage, however short-lasting, but also a recognized pater: he gives the child his own spiritual identity and his or her name; he admits his responsibility for the child's education, and he has the expectation that the child will carry out the father's funerary rites.

A child inherits his or her blood from the mother, and character or temperament from the father. Maternal blood ensures the child's membership in the *abusua* (clan or lineage); paternity bestows membership in one of nine other groups or categories. Although some accounts claim the Akan descent system is one of double descent, this view appears to be based on a misreading of the actual roles of the two lines of descent.

Despite being jurally matrilineal, inheritance is to some extent divided between sister's children and a man's own children. The basic principle is that lineage-inherited property goes to sisters' children, and property acquired with the help of a man's wife and children is distributed among the latter at his death.

The Akan practiced slavery, obtaining slaves from northern slave dealers, usually Muslims. War captives, criminals, persons who opposed local chiefs, and many local ritual leaders were also enslaved. Slaves were used for domestic and field labor, for sale to traders across the Sahara and across the Atlantic, and as sacrifices to royal and other ancestors. In the middle of the nineteenth century, slaves amounted to half of the population in many towns.

## User Contributions:

**Bonsu Nana Serwah**

Nov 20, 2011 @ 4:16 pm



I want to know if jewellery is used during any traditional marriage ceremony of the Akans in Ghana?

**Comment about this article, ask questions, or add new information about this topic:**

Name:

E-mail:

Security Code:

☐ Display email publicly

Comment: (50-4000 characters)

[Akan forum](#)[« Aimaq](#)[Alur »](#)